

8-30-1991

## Resist Newsletter, July-Aug 1991

Resist

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### Recommended Citation

Resist, "Resist Newsletter, July-Aug 1991" (1991). *Resist Newsletters*. 235.  
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*Funding Social Change Since 1967*

# RESIST

Newsletter #237

*A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority*

July/August, 1991

## Listen Up: Youth, Writing, and Resistance

RACHEL MARTIN

*"The way people look at me is unbelievable. Do you know how it feels to walk down the street and have people cross the street to get away from you? Or how it feels to have a security guard follow you around every time you go into a store? Or have women clutch their handbags to their chests when they see you? Well, that's how it is when you're young and Black."*

Troy Cornelius  
Age 18  
Youth Force

*"I moved here about four months ago because I kept having problems with the foster homes I was living in. They would freak out about me being gay..."*

Tracy, Age 15  
Teen Voices

*"First it was a goose; now it's a 8 ball coat. Cops have taken this as the wardrobe of the drug dealers. The cop says something to you, and then you say something back to him. Then he takes you in and gets you for insulting an officer. When you really didn't do anything in the first place but wear an 8 ball coat."*

Lakisha Austin  
Age 15  
United Youth of Boston

*"I think that boys judge girls on how they look. Like they ask you on the phone, 'Are you light-skinned?' And my line will be, 'Hey, I'm Black, does that matter?' If he thinks he's too much to go with a dark-skinned girl, I hang up. It's like he doesn't want his friends saying, 'Oh, you go with that dark-skinned girl?' I think that if a boy likes a girl, he can go with her just for her."*

Tawana Brooks  
Age 13  
United Youth of Boston

*"I had someone very special to me taken away, by the fire of a gun. I know there are many other teenagers who have had the same kind of incidents happen to them. As a teenager in the inner-city, you have to pretend that it doesn't bother you in the least. Every day there is someone new leaving your life; you soon learn how to deal with it. But that's not the point. It shouldn't have to be this way..."*

Katrina Smith  
Age 17  
Teen Voices

There are voices around us that bring into sharp relief many of the issues for which we struggle, yet they have remained largely unheard by many on the left. They are the voices of youth, many of whom are on the front line. More and more, they are told that their education, their health, their lives have no value. It's taking its toll on

teenagers, and some are fighting back. This issue of the **Resist Newsletter** highlights youth publishing in low-income communities and communities of color. Most of the publications reviewed here share the commitment of New York's **Youth Force**, whose by-laws stipulate that the majority of writers/staff not be "Board of Ed. Superstars." One-third of **Youth Force** staff are former drug dealers. Most have dropped out of school; some have

*continued on page two*

DO YOU KNOW  
WHAT TIME IT IS?



A TIME TO ACT

Illustration: Henry Diaz, Youth Force



back to G.E.D. programs. These publications are produced by teenagers who have not done well by the system—education, child welfare, legal—and the system has a critical edge.

Not all of the writings reflect a clear social agenda. And some say things we don't wish they didn't say. Still, they are important to read. Sometimes, in their very contradictions, they reveal the complexity of the youths' lived experience. There is information here we need in order to ground our own theoretical and practical work for change on a more complete body of experience.

The youths' work is valuable not only because it is their work. Some publishing projects are tied directly to youth who are organizing for social change. And for projects that are not, having a connection which young writers and editors are making decisions important to them, their words are granted authority, and it is more likely they will resist being drowned around by the system ten years from now.

Although the adults who helped get these publications off the ground came from different political perspectives, there are similarities in the youths' writings about the country. While they don't speak with one voice, whether writing about the physical or sexual abuse, inter-generational, or growing up gay, they speak to power relations. In doing so, they urge us to broaden our notion of what the social agenda is to include fighting to reform the foster care system—understand some youth cynically refer to themselves as "state property"—as hard as we can police brutality.

As you will see, there are youth who are tired of being asked only to express the problems they have about their lives. Positioned as victims, they are seldom asked for analysis. Analysis is here in the bits you'll read, though not always immediately recognizable as such. And the feelings are openly expressed—the feelings, as adults, may keep buried in our

## RECTION

ologies to Resist board member, Hans Koning, for misspelling his name in his article, "Don't Celebrate - Mourn It," April 1991 Resist letter. Sorry, Hans.

From my own involvement in neighborhood writing and publishing, I've learned the importance of people drawing their own image of their communities, contradicting those conjured more often by writers and journalists who live outside of them. While the self-made images do sometimes reflect the impact of violence and drugs in a community, just as often they include barbecues, neighbors, tenant organizing, Mandela's visit. In a similar way, youths' lives are written about most often by adults. And I've seen how the media images, particularly of urban youth of color, sometimes seep into a community's own perception. There are women I know in Boston neighborhoods who are afraid of the teenagers who live on their block. And the teenagers feel it. For community organizations, this presents a barrier to creating alliances. What may be most important about youth publishing is that it defines the "political" as creating one's own image and articulating one's own situation.

Inside this issue, you'll find excerpts from several youth publications that do just that. This article provides an overview of who's writing, what they're saying, and why we need to listen.

*"The questions of who is to speak, who is to be listened to, and what kinds of voices and ways of writing are to be valued are always questions of political power."*

**The Republic of Letters**

*"Sometimes they searched me for no reason. Listen up clearly. This is an action I have had experience with. Me being searched for nothing at all. I could've been on a drug street where someone that knew me called my name to get my attention. Sometimes the police would see me walking down the street and they will stare at me like I have done something wrong."*

*"So their actions gave me the impression they wanted me badly. So I started not to care about what they stared at or said to us. That meant I have gained more of a street mind towards certain things in life."*

**Patrick Cedenio  
Tales From  
Boston Neighborhoods**

The police figure large in young urban writing. Much of the writings are first person narratives, though a few publications like **LA Youth** are journalistic. In

May of this year, **LA Youth** was the first to break the story that L.A.P.D. chief Daryl Gates had overturned a police investigators' recommended suspension of an officer involved in harassment of Black and Latino youth. Using her own sources, 17 year-old Josie Valderrama obtained the internal police report that the adult media weren't even looking for. Once uncovered, however, the report—and **LA Youth**—became the lead story on the 6:00 news in Los Angeles.

The June 1990 issue of **LA Youth** had reported the initial incident, in which the teenagers have accused police of physical violence at a state park:

*"I was tripped. They pushed and shoved me. They called me a 'beaner', asked me if I had a green card and told me to go to the other side of town. One officer challenged me to go in the bushes and fight. He said he would take off his belt and badge and we would see who would come out first. He said he might have an accidental discharge from his gun."*

The internal police report obtained by **LA Youth** disputes most of the youths' claims. But it does recommend a two-day

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## A CALL TO RESIST



### ILLEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

*Funding social change since 1967*

For information and grant guidelines write to:  
Resist, One Summer St., Somerville, MA 02143

The *Resist Newsletter* is published ten times a year by Resist, Inc., One Summer Street, Somerville, MA 02143. (617) 623-5110. The views expressed in articles, other than editorials, are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Resist staff or board.

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Nancy Moniz  
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Typesetting: Wayne Curtis  
*Gay Community News*

Printing: Red Sun Press  
Printed on Recycled Paper



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suspension for an officer involved, acknowledging that he "unnecessarily ordered (one of the teens) to walk on his knees." As for the allegations of racism, the police press officer said, "We don't tolerate racism in this department."

The current issue of **LA Youth** also reports increased support for youth claims of harassment since the beating of Rodney King:

*"At first the community, they were backing the police. Even my own mother was down on me. But because of Rodney King, they're on our side," said Christopher Walker, 19, one of the youths involved in the (park) incident.*

*"After the Rodney King incident I guess I feel like I'm one up on the police. They have the bad rep, not me. I guess I do feel safer. To me, they have to prove themselves all over," said Javier Gonzalez, 18, of Santa Monica City College, who is also suing the police."*

The position of teens who translate for their parents is highlighted in the current issue of **LA Youth**. Called on to intervene in adult situations such as court proceedings, the teenagers complain that they are at the same time disrespected by judges and other officials who view them as "just kids." Youth News Service, the publisher of **LA Youth**, continues to grow. Next month, it brings out the first fully bilingual newspaper by and for teens, outside of a school setting. **El Original**, produced by Latino and Black youth, comes out of south-central L.A.

### Claiming the Mountains as Home

In rural West Virginia, teens are writing about issues they share with urban youth—sexual abuse, addiction, pressures—but also about "what it means to claim the mountains as home." In a state with the highest out-migration rate in the country, "Holding Onto Home" is the theme of an upcoming issue of the magazine, **Step By Step**, in which youth discuss what they see as future economic options for their communities and themselves. It's also the title of a **Step By Step** project in which young people are encouraged to make decisions about whether to stay in the mountains or leave based on the values they've developed and the experiences they've had growing up in West Virginia. The project is also geared to prepar-

ing youth to enter the public debate on the myriad economic development proposals in the state, and to propose their own.

In another current project, **Step By Step** is both publishing the writings of youth growing up under the child welfare system and providing them with technical assistance to take on that system themselves. The first step is critical. **Step By Step**'s Michael Tierney points out that we don't have direct accounts from the youth who are in the system. With training provided by Rural Southern Voice for Peace, the teens are interviewing each other; biological parents; foster parents, brothers and sisters; judges; social workers; and probation officers. The result will be an anthology about growing up in foster care (doing the "system shuffle," as one teen calls it); the identification of youth rights and due process issues; and a handbook on entering, surviving and making the transition from the system. Teens have developed their own speaker's bureau on the child welfare system, and one young woman decided to create and lobby for a state bill requiring that children be involved in decisions about where they be placed. The bill didn't pass, but she's going back next year.



Illustration: Aaron Vest, **Step by Step**

### Contradicting a Docile Image

More traditional than publishing the writings of young people is encouraging them to take part in oral history projects. Dating back to the **Foxfire** series begun in Georgia in 1972, youth have been documenting what poor people in their communities have done, with dignity, to survive. Less typical is documenting their struggles

for change.

The organizers of the Central Manchester Caribbean English Project in Manchester, England found that many of the young people involved expressed the idea that their parents had "taken a lot of racist treatment and done nothing to defend themselves." Begun as a project by Caribbean youth to investigate the African heritage they were never taught in the schools and to talk about the meaning of the Rasta experience, the participants went on to interview their parents and grandparents. The result of their work is **Triangular Minds: Black Youth on Identity**. The title was chosen "to reflect the influence of Africa, the Caribbean and England on our lives and on our way of thinking." The book documents the youths' experience of life in British society, and it points to their alliances with other groups who have a similar history of colonization. It also presents some recollections of the older people who came to England in the fifties. Just as the book contradicts the image of Black youth transmitted by the media, it contradicts the young people's image of their parents as "a docile, accepting people." Transcribed in Patwa, the stories tell of people's daily acts of defiance and solidarity in their jobs in Manchester's dye and canning factories.

The stories they recorded made the youth's wonder: "Were they just sitting back and accepting things? Were they in control of their own lives? Would they themselves be blamed by their own children for being docile?"

As a way to assert some control, the authors later used the information they had gathered in lobbying City Council to make a program on Caribbean language and culture part of its mainstream curriculum.

### Creating a Different Knowledge

While some oral history work has documented the lives of community-level activists in the Civil Rights Movement, **Minds Stayed on Freedom** may be the first to do so from the perspective of the generation just coming up now in the South. Its authors are eighth and ninth graders in Holmes County, Mississippi, many of whom are the grandchildren of the people they interviewed. They elicited and recorded stories of their relatives and neighbors who housed Freedom Riders while crosses burned in their yards; who sent their children to integrate the schools, as their names were posted on lists in town so whites could retaliate; who are still

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# Youth: In Their Own Image

The young males today put a big value on sex. I think it has something to do with their peers putting pressure on them, so they put pressure on the girl. The boy then puts mental stress on the girl who is probably already confused about sex and when to have it. The boy then does his smooth talk and gives her his he would-never-do-anything-to-hurt her routine. Which most girls fall for. Guys don't say, "I want to hit it." They try to sweet talk you. They say something like, "I love you, and I care about you." Then he will kiss you. All the while she's feeling like it's right, then she comes to her senses and says "no." If the guy understands, he'll say he'll still be there when the time is right. But other guys could say, "Yo, I like you, and I want it." He could try to force her, and then if she don't want to, he'll go dissing her to his friends.

I'm trying to hip my friends to the fact. If I don't want it, that's not sex, that's rape. I feel like, if I'm having sex with you, and I'm not enjoying it, you're not going to get all of what sex can be.

Lakisha Austin  
United Youth of Boston

I moved here about four months ago because I kept having problems with the foster homes I was living in. They would freak out about me being gay and they didn't know how to handle me.

Where I was from, I couldn't really be "out" because people don't understand. So I got placed here with lesbian foster parents. It's working out good because they understand me....

I wrote a letter to my father telling him I was gay, telling him how I was still the same, and there wasn't anything different about me. It was just this one little thing that I wanted him to know about me....I haven't heard from him. It was just important for me to tell him....

I'm not "out" to a lot of people. You have to get to know someone and see if you can trust them first. Then if you want to tell them, it's okay. My girlfriend—that's how she became my girlfriend. We got to know each other and I felt I could

tell her and then we got together. This is my first relationship; I'm really happy.

It's important to me to be able to tell people. When you keep something inside, it does so much to you that you don't even realize.

Tracy  
Teen Voices



Illustration: Marcus Jimenez, Youth Force

I hang with white guys. But with your black friends, you talk about different things. Like, when I'm with Randell and my friends I might say, "Stop playing, Nigger." And if a white friend of mine was to say that, I would probably tell him to shut the hell up! But it would have to depend on how long I knew him and also how much I liked him. Then it wouldn't bother me, if he said it a few times. But not using it as if it's just another word. 'Cause it ain't just another word.

My mother doesn't like it, she says "cause ain't nobody a nigger." Maybe she's right, but I grew up saying it. I made sure my grandfather wasn't around though, if I said it down south. If he heard me, he'd say, "Boy, I'll shoot you, you say that again! 'Cause that's what white people want us to be." The KKK had spray painted the front of our house the day my mother finished paying for it.

One day after school me and my boy, Josef, went downtown, and while waiting for the train, Josef saw one of his friends. So I told him I'll call him when the train comes, so he can talk to his

friend. I guess they decided on staying downtown, and Josef called me. But I was a distance, so I couldn't hear. Then his friend yelled out loud, "Come here, Nigger." So I came and I pulled Josef to the side and told him if his friend don't watch his mouth, he's going to get his feelings hurt. So Josef told him about how I felt, and I guess he agreed not to say it anymore. And Josef called me a nigger, but it didn't bother me because I like Josef a lot. And then I noticed that everyone in the station was looking at Josef's friend. And I said next time, if I don't do anything about it, someone else might because in Downtown Crossing there are a lot of black people. Now the gang members might jump the boy or even severely hurt him or kill him. And as for the adults, they might start talking about him out loud, making him feel uncomfortable and make him leave without him wanting to. Some people aren't as nice as me, and only gonna take it but so much. I ain't gonna take it but so much.

Lamont Walker  
United Youth of Boston

...I remember one time when I was in about the fifth grade somebody came and tried to talk to my mom about the abuse. In some way she always managed to avoid ever getting into any kind of trouble. Looking back it's really surprising because she was so blatant. We were always covered with bruises. We had lumps, scratches everywhere. When we got to high school age and we got to be with people we could actually talk to, that's when I started to really worry about my younger sister and baby sister. But nobody came in and actu-

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HIGHER I

I want you to do your job, right not wrong.  
You're always on the outside lookin' in, you d  
Talk to us, we're the ones seeing baseheads ge  
The papers make us out to be something we're  
You've never been there. Has a close friend of  
You can't relate to us; we live in the pain.  
You don't know 'cause you're on the outside l  
Do your reseach, do your job, and you'll know



ally tried to take us away or anything.

I don't know why I never did anything. I guess I was afraid. I mean, my mother was all I had. My father, at that time, had remarried and had three kids of his own, and he couldn't afford to take anybody else in. Even though I didn't get along with my sisters, I couldn't stand to see us get split up.

When my mom committed suicide, it was really hard because we had just started talking again and she hadn't said a kind word to me in almost two years. It was very, very hard when I found out because I loved her. That was something my husband couldn't ever understand. As awful as she was to us, she really was my mom and I loved her a lot. Sometimes I don't think I've dealt with it completely because I have dreams about her almost every night.

I never had hatred for her, just anger inside. Especially when she died. That angered me so much because she worked so hard all her life. A lot of people can't understand why I defend her in some of the things she did. She had an extremely rough life. She always worked hard. She always wanted so much. To think of some of the places that we lived in growing up, then to see the house that she had when she died. She had a beautiful house.

I was thinking back to some of our outings and things we used to do growing up. We never went to the museums or to the zoos or to the parks. We went to motorcycle races and we'd get drunk. She would have this big bowl of fruit soaked in rum, and she would give it to us. We would get drunk and pass out in the car. I was 7, 8, 9 and 10 years old!

## OUR JOB!

UP  
MEDIA:  
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know what's really going on.

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rs ever died due to drugs and gangs?

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at I mean!

Toni Martin

Tales From Boston Neighborhoods

It saddens me but, I don't think I hated her. I felt sorry for her. I desperately wanted her to be happy. She was one of the most unhappy people I have ever met in my life. She chose certain things along the way and wouldn't give them up. She was an alcoholic. I think it was mom's biggest downfall: alcohol. But, I never hated her.

Cassie Blackstone  
Step By Step

It was around the time of the Stuart murder. One morning me and my boy was walking to school. A man was walking in our direction and my boy said, "Watch this." He said, "From now on they're going to kill every white person that walk through Mission Hill. Just like the Stuar-arts." So the man heard us, and he ran so fast all the way down Parker Street, yelling, "Taxi, Taxi." Now, I'm not saying he would have been scared if he hadn't heard that. But white people *do* be walking fast in Mission Hill.

Lamont Walker  
United Youth of Boston

## 911 IS A JOKE

There is a song by Public Enemy called, "911 Is a Joke." I think that's true. The cops, they should check all people, even white people, because I be seeing nice looking people come into my hallway. Come to turn out they be selling drugs or even buying them. But I think the cops better get their act together. Like some of the cops, they ride by and say "Hi" and other cops act like they too good to say "Hi." Well, anyways, what I'm trying to say is, the cops better check all people and act like they know because they just don't know. They be riding by people that sell drugs and stuff and then you turn around and they be checking the wrong person. So that's all I got to say.

Carol Watkins  
Tales From Boston Neighborhoods

Around my block, there's a game we called "the Bum Rush" that other teenagers and I used to play. The game was to see who could hurt the most homosexuals going to the nearby club. The reason we played this game was because the club we went to was closed down and turned into a homosexual hangout. We really didn't like the idea of homosexuals taking over our disco and walking through our neighbor-

hood to get there.

We used to wait for them at the corner and when they used to pass by, we would jump out of nowhere and scare the hell out of them and we would take anything of value. Almost every teenager on the block played the game. They really got a kick out of seeing these people get kicked, punched, stomped, and knocked down, and sometimes bleeding to death.

There was this one time when there was this guy coming down the street and about 12 of us jumped on him at the same time. The look on his face was with terror.

The thoughts started running through my mind: Why were we doing this to him? The pain, the fear, and the embarrassment he must have felt! Why should anyone be treated like this because they are different? We weren't even sure that he was gay. After that I knew it was time to stop the game.

After a few weeks, everyone stopped. I wonder if it was because they felt the same way I did, or something else. Maybe because the club returned to its old format and the people who were homosexuals, or looked like homosexuals, stopped coming around. We were happy that they returned the club back, but this was a laughing matter. All I could remember was the fear in his face. It taught me a lesson.

Freddy Gonzalez  
Youth Force

## RASTA

I see Rasta as one of the reactions. It's one of the things that is holding people together in the face of what is happening. Now, to me, the thing about Rasta is that it is a reaction where essentially, it calls you to identify with everything about you that is black. Now, that is something that is not true of Christian churches. They try to move you away into a "we are all God's children" point of view. Whereas, Rasta is leading you towards "we are African." This is our origin. We are different because we are African.

Although I know that in the wider sense, Rasta is willing to embrace all people, in its present manifestation in England now, it's very much a black consciousness type of group. So those are the things that mean by Rasta.

Triangular Mine  
Black Youth on Identity  
Author not identified



active in the civil rights movement now.

*"Our title comes from a freedom song that was used to make black people in struggle unite and become stronger. That's also what happened to us as we struggled over fourteen months to make this book—we united and got stronger. We also became prouder and prouder; proud of the way our people fought for their natural rights and proud of ourselves for capturing that history for all to read and learn from."*

These, too, are youth gaining an authoritative stance that can only lead to increased resistance in their own adult lives. Even in working with the editors at Westview, they maintained an authority. "Westview's editors had some good suggestions, but we made sure that the people's words remained the way they said them."

As important, in **Minds Stayed on Freedom**, this knowledge generated about the Civil Rights Movement has been shaped differently because young people were asking the questions, sometimes in a fashion typical of youth who are impatient for change:

*"After listening to Austray Kirklin relate the physical hardships and psychological anguish of the Jim Crow era, what scholar or journalist would come back with, 'What made you all of a sudden just start the Movement? How come you didn't start it before?' That's what her two granddaughters asked, prompting an even more evocative description of African-American life prior to the civil rights struggle."*

From the Introduction

### Not Just Victims

*"Some people say 'youth are the problem.' There's not enough discipline nowadays; young people are the ones dealing the drugs, mugging, shooting up the community. Stop them—search them, send them to boot camp, to prison. Shave their heads, pull their pants down in the streets; go after the casual user. Put inner-city Black children in orphanages....Build more jails."*

*There are a second set of people who view youth as the victims.*

*'How does this crisis make you feel?'*

*'Well, I think...'*

*'No. How does it make you feel?'*

*An increasing number of adults are interested in young people's emotions*

*about the situation. Are we sad, scared, confused, or angry? But while they want to hear about our feelings, they do not want to hear our analysis of the situation. They paint us as the victims—helpless, hopeless, passive, pitiful....*

*We say youth are the answer; we are on the front lines of this struggle."*

From "The Answer That Stares You in the Face" by Aya de León  
**Free My People Newsletter**

Believing it was "unacceptable for youth to be relegated to being ushers or making ribbons," Free My People Youth Leadership Movement sponsored (and pushed for) Mandela's visit to Roxbury when he came to Boston. As a political organization, Free My People has taken writing seriously since its beginning. Aya de León, former chair of the writers' committee: "Whenever there is violence in the community, the media wants to see us cry, get mad, or despair. They don't want to see us calmly—or even passionately—articulate what we see the problems, or solutions, being. Our feelings are often appropriated by adults for use in their media. Nobody would have an adult political organizer on a talk show and ask, 'Are you afraid? Do you have nightmares?' For political organizers, we are valuable for how we support their agenda, 'Look, the youth are upset.' But we don't just experience the world, we are also able to critique our world. We are capable of secondary, even tertiary, analysis. We not only have our own, we are able to say, 'Look, your analysis is bogus.'"

de León's words reminded me of something I'd read in **United Youth of Boston**. While the high drop-out rate among Latino students is often cited in studies of education, seldom do we hear an analysis offered by youth themselves. Amarilis Chavez tells us that many Latino students see dropping out of school as an act of self-preservation. "(Latino students) quit school because...we are too smart to believe that we can be part of a group that tries to make us forget that we are Latinos, and so we leave, thinking that's the way to make a difference." As Aman Evans, writing in the same newspaper, says, "Instead of making up theories about what teens need, adults should just listen when a teen speaks...."

At the same time de León is tired of seeing youth positioned only as victims, she laments the fact that adults can't express their feelings. "Youth sometimes

voice the feelings adults don't feel comfortable expressing anymore. None of the community leaders can say, 'I am afraid.' The fear of a whole community gets expressed through the youth."

As important as the public voice Free My People expresses through its newsletter, is the internal conversation the writings spark. The writing is very collective, according to de León. The process makes it possible for group members to talk about things that wouldn't have been discussed so thoroughly otherwise. de León points to the example of the group discussion prompted by an article on colorism,\* "an issue which in our community is really hard to talk about."

### Why publish the writings of youth?

"There are false distinctions made between what's political and what's not. We need to give youth the attitude that your opinion, your thoughts matter. For white, middle class youth, it may not be so important. For kids of color, it's crucial. For lesbian and gay youth, the homeless—young people who are members of a disadvantaged group, whose realities are never reflected in classrooms or the media—it's crucial."

Barbara Smith  
KitchenTable:  
Women of Color Press

Sharon Cox, a poet/writer in Roxbury, Massachusetts, says, "Kids are being told, 'You're expendable.' It's hard to get to be twenty-five and be a person with dreams." Yet it's often dreams that lead to resistance. I think about what she says when I'm doing workshops for teenagers in a residential detention center, the writings from which will be submitted for publication in a youth newspaper. The teenagers shoot rubber bands across the room, they wrestle, papers and pencils fly to the floor....Yet for the five minutes they are writing, there is silence. They are telling their stories—about being "committed," "state property," the possibility of being "bound over"—and they know the stories will be read. It's the time in the week when the focus is not on group therapy—what they need to do to change—but

*continued on page seven*

\*de León defines "colorism" as "the tension between people of African descent on the basis of different skin tones, hair textures and features, in the context of a society that says light and white is better."



continued from page six  
on how the world needs to. Their words are not expendable, and it seems like while they are writing, they know it. □

Rachel Martin is guest editor of this issue of the *Resist Newsletter*. She teaches community writing workshops for adults and teenagers, and is active in the "We Care Committee," a youth/adult alliance in Roxbury, MA. Many thanks to Sukey Blanc, Tom Brouillette, Andrea Nash, and Paul Socolar for their input to this article.

## Publications Quoted:

**Free My People**  
328 Warren Street  
Roxbury, MA 02119

**LA Youth**  
6030 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 400  
Los Angeles, CA 90036

**Minds Stayed On Freedom**  
Published by Westview Press  
Also contact: Rural Organizing and Cultural Center  
103 Swinney Lane  
Lexington, MS 39095

**Step By Step**  
P.O. Box 510  
Ripley, WV 25271

**Tales From Boston Neighborhoods**  
c/o Rachel Martin  
302 Arlington Street  
Watertown, MA 02172

**Teen Voices**  
JFK P.O. Box 6009  
Boston, MA 02114

**Triangular Minds:**  
**Black Youth on Identity**  
The Community Education Afro-Caribbean Language Unit  
Moss Side Community Education Centre  
40 Embden Walk  
Moss Side Precinct  
Manchester, M15 5NW  
England

**United Youth of Boston**  
312 Stuart Street, 4th Floor  
Boston, MA 02116

**Youth Force**  
3 West 29th Street  
New York, New York 10001

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efforts. In their brochure announcing the formation of the network, the organizers write:

*"Our everyday lives are touched by Central America. We eat their bananas and drink their coffee. We hear about elections, boycotts, and massacres....Those of us who work send tax dollars there—about \$1 million a day to El Salvador alone.*

*Yet how much do we know about these neighbors who are nearer to us than Disneyland?"*

More youth will have the chance to learn, as part of this summer's youth delegation to Tegucigalpa and Managua.

**Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft**, P.O. Box 15195, San Diego, CA 92175

*"Is the draft necessary to defend our country?" "Doesn't a draft make nuclear war less likely?" "Why not wait until there is a draft to be concerned?"* These questions, and others posed by San Diego youth, are addressed through the "Campaign to Demilitarize the Schools". A project of the Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft (COMD), the campaign was launched late last fall, timed to "help undermine support for war among those who (may) be ordered to fight." In an area with over 100 military-related sites, the campaign's on-going goal is to motivate students and parents to actively work against the presence of military recruiters in their neighborhood schools. To this end, COMD collects anecdotes on recruiter fraud, distributes them to students and the media, and is making them available through its "Demilitarize Your Schools Campaign Kit", which also includes an activity guide. Among the other components of the campaign are the production of free stickers, designed for creative placement inside and around schools; the distribution of model "Demilitarize Our School" petitions; and press releases to school and community media. Designed with input from high school students who are members of the planning committee, these components are currently being tested for inclusion in a possible national campaign, jointly sponsored by several local, regional and national organizations.

COMD was founded in 1979 as San Diego CARD (Committee Against Regis-

tration and the Draft). In 1983 the organization filed suit against a local school district that had directed the student newspapers to refuse CARD's ads. The school board claimed that the anti-draft ads were "political," while the military recruiters' ads were "nonpolitical and commercial." San Diego CARD's victory in the case, mandating that high school newspapers which sell advertising space to recruiters must also sell to groups opposed to the draft, set precedent on the issue. The organization changed its name the following year to reflect a broadened analysis and a wider range of issues addressed. Still within the context of militarism, COMD does educational work on South Africa, Central America, the Middle East, sexism, and other topics. It has established working relationships with local Chicano organizations. Its newsletter, **Draft Notices**, includes articles on the militarization of San Diego's border with Mexico, military involvement in the "drug war," and gays and lesbians in the military. Several issues have been devoted to women and militarism.

The funds from Resist will go toward expenses of the "Campaign to Demilitarize Our Schools."

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## Are You Receiving Two Subs?

We don't like to waste postage any more than you do, but our mailing list is so large that it is often hard to know if we are sending out duplicate mailings. Sometimes one person at an address sends us a donation, and because that person isn't the one whose name first appears on our list, we think it's a new donor. Other times we've spelled the name incorrectly, and when we get a donation with the correct spelling we don't always catch that it is the same person. (And sometimes you even change your name, but forget to tell us!) And then there's the fact that we receive checks from someone's home address one time, and their office address the next time. Since we aren't always sure whether it's the same person or not, we send out another sub.

Help us cut down on duplicate mailings. The simplest way for you to help us eliminate duplicate mailings is by sending us the address labels and letting us know which is correct and which we can delete. The money we save can go to the groups we fund. Thanks for helping us out.



# GRANTS

In this issue of **Resist** we highlight a few recent grants made to youth projects. The information in these reports is provided to us by the groups themselves. For more information, please write to them at the addresses listed.

**Youth Against Militarism Project, 2025**  
Nicollet Avenue South, #203, Minneapolis, MN 55404

"May the earth shake with our words", sums up a collective statement from the editors of **Free Association: An Alternative Rag for Youth**. The newspaper was founded by the Youth Against Militarism Project, which began in 1987 to counter the effects of military recruiters in St. Paul/Minneapolis high schools. The youth-run **Free Association** publishes prose, analysis, poetry and artwork by teenagers who want to "bring the lessons of our activism to the community of our peers." Recent articles, including "Spearfishing: What the Mainstream Media Doesn't Tell You", "Israeli Apartheid", and "Earth Day Sham", demonstrate the range of issues on which contributors to the quarterly newspaper take a stand. Among its activist work, **Free Association** organized a January 17 Day of Protest at 17 high schools, and sent a youth contingent to northern Wisconsin to demonstrate in support of Native American treaty rights.

Publishing a collectively-run newspaper has called on the editors to continually educate themselves. A decision to reject a poem that could have been interpreted as homophobic came as the result of internal consciousness-raising. The youth contrast this "creative and productive" education with their "full-time careers as high school students."

Acknowledging that "the outside world... can often seem dark and grim," the collective members are optimistic about change:

*"...the system we live in, created by us, is oppressive, a boot in our face. But it is gradually disheveling. We gain strength from every millimeter that budges....There is much anger, frustration, hope, peace, sadness, love, and strength contained in these pages, vibrating through the black ink. It is meant for you to catch our energy."*



Graphic reprinted from **Free Association**

The Resist grant, in response to a proposal written mostly by the youth, covers the cost of producing one issue of **Free Association**. The request has inspired a discussion on including a question on the Resist funding application regarding a grant seeker's outreach to youth.

**Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America, 1105 Sapling Place, Raleigh, NC 27615**

During the past two years, 25 North Carolina teenagers have gone to Honduras and Nicaragua with the Episcopal Diocese and Witness for Peace. Many have returned not sure what to do in response to what they've seen. Their questions

prompted the Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America to look at how to include both the needs and the insights of youth into its on-going solidarity work. The Carolina Youth Network on Central America was formed in 1990 by a youth/adult team. Based on the teenagers' recommendations, the Network emphasizes the connection between the crisis in Central America and the concerns of youth in the south, including the environment, job options, and agriculture. Among its activities are study groups; delegations to Central America; a state-wide retreat; trainings workshops on lobbying and organizing; and a youth speakers' bureau which has addressed audiences in churches, universities, and high school social studies and Spanish classes in Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill.

The Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America was itself founded in 1982 and is made up of 27 smaller task forces in North and South Carolina. It was the first to conceive of the idea of Witness for Peace and helped turn it into a national organization. This spring, its "Media Alert Mailings" encouraged people to write letters to the editor and Op. Ed. pieces, helping to keep alive the issue of the wars in Central America while the journalists focused exclusively on the Persian Gulf. One of the Task Force's goals for this year is to develop education and action programs which make clear the links between Central America, the Persian Gulf, the environment and poverty in the south.

Resist is funding printing and postage costs for the youth network's outreach  
*continued on page seven*

## Join the Resist Pledge Program

We'd like you to consider becoming a Resist Pledge. Pledges account for over 25% of our income. By becoming a pledge, you help guarantee Resist a fixed and dependable source of income on which we can build our grant making program. In return, we will send you a monthly pledge letter and reminder, along with your newsletter. We will keep you up-to-date on the groups we have funded, and the other work being done at Resist. So take the plunge and become a Resist Pledge! We count on you, and the groups we fund count on us.

☐ **Yes! I would like to become a Resist Pledge. I'd like to pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, 2x a year, yearly).**

☐ **Enclosed is my pledge contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.**

☐ **I can't join the pledge program just now, but here's a contribution to support your work. \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

Resist

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